Equal Employment Opportunity and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment

HQ MEDCOM
OFFICE OF EEO PROGRAMS

Bases of Discrimination

- Race
- Color
- Sex
- National Origin
- Religion
- Disability
- Reprisal (prior EEO-protected activity)
- Age

Time Limits

- Aggrieved person must bring the claim of discrimination to the attention of the EEO Office within 45 calendar days of occurrence.

Protocol

- Aggrieved person should attempt to resolve issue through chain of command prior to coming to EEO Office, where feasible.
- Management should make every attempt to resolve issue with the aggrieved person.

Processing

- Traditional pre-complaint counseling is performed within 30 calendar days.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (mediation) is completed within 90 calendar days.

Benefits of Resolution

- Restores harmony to the workplace
- Saves money
- Saves time
- Saves emotions

Sexual Harassment Dynamics

Attitude

Behavior

Communication

Sexual Harassment Defined

Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; other conduct of a sexual nature:

- Affecting terms or conditions of employment
- Used for employment decisions
- Creating a hostile work environment

Types of Harassment

- Quid Pro Quo
  (Tangible Employment Action)
- Hostile Work Environment

Symbolic Harassment

- Clothing
- Jewelry
- Hair Style
- Vehicle Attachments
- Computer Screen Savers and E-mail

Verbal Harassment

- Slang
- Jokes
- Profanity
- Tone
- Pitch
- Speech Timing
- Pauses

Non-verbal Harassment

- Distance – Intimate/Personal/Social/Public
- Touch
- Eye Contact
- Body Language

Organizational Impact

- Lost productivity
- Absenteeism
- Lost time and resources
- Negative impact on cohesion, morale, performance, mission accomplishment

Personal Impact

- Creation or reinforcement of sexual/racial stereotypes
- Avoidance
- Homicidal violence
- Suicidal violence

Addressing Harassment

- Keep a record
  * Date, time, location
  * What was said by you and harasser
  * Names of any witnesses
  * Names of anyone you told
  * Names of others harassed

Preventing Harassment

- Issue and post policy
- Ensure management accountability
- De-sexualize workplace – focus on professionalism
- Investigate complaints thoroughly, impartially; take corrective action
- Train

Avenues of Redress

- Informal Actions
  * Confront
  * Talk with supervisor
  * Pursue EEO counseling
- Formal Actions
  * File discrimination complaint, IG, MSPB

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